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## Appendix 3: Questions and Answers



## Questions and Answers

*Q. What is the long term vision for revenue and information processing within the State?*

A. The aim of the State is to utilize EFT and EDI to the extent possible. Electronic transfer of funds and information allows transactions to occur in a timely and accurate fashion with a minimum of handling required. Costs per transaction are significantly reduced through electronic transfers and the revenue and information data are received at the State in a form that can be instantly analysed, aggregated, recombined or otherwise utilised for managerial decision-making purposes. EFT/EDI transactions will not be ubiquitous in Montana for years, however, efforts will continue to be made to migrate revenue and information processing to EFT/EDI as opportunities present themselves.

*Q. My program requires a one day maximum processing time from the centralized revenue and information processing center. How can you guarantee that the one day maximum will be adhered to?*

A. The vision for the new center includes a target of 3 hour processing time (See Appendix 2: Visioning Session Results). Using streamlined processes such as direct mail pick-up, coupon based remittances and optimized workflow methods and technology enablers such as EFT/EDI, scanners, mail handling equipment and technology links to departments, the center will process revenues in the required time frame.

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## Q & A

Montana Power has established a revenue processing center that handles 15,000 transactions between 8:00 and 2:30 each day in a purpose designed facility. Although the State's revenue and information processing requirements are more complicated than those of Montana Power, the best practices from the Montana Power center and other similar facilities can certainly be applied in the State's revenue and information processing center. On average the State's processing center would be receiving a maximum of 6,400 transactions per day if all revenue transactions were centralized.

At the end of the day, the most convincing proof of the center's ability to meet the required processing time will be provided by the piloting and testing phase of implementation. During this phase the center will demonstrate its ability to meet timing and other operational metrics necessary to provide the required level of customer service to State agencies.

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## Q & A

Q. *How will the center resolve discrepancies between payment and accompanying information prior to processing the payment and still meet the one day processing requirement?*

A. This was a concern expressed by many Departments. The center will attempt to resolve only those discrepancies that can be resolved with one telephone call and little program specific knowledge. The staff in the center will be assigned to process the transactions of selected Departments. Such a policy will enable the staff of the center to use their judgment and experience with specific revenue types to resolve problems.

Examples of the types of discrepancies that would be handled within the center include

- cheques written incorrectly or not signed;
- cheques not identified with a specific payment; or
- date of collection not identified in the case of withholding payments.

In the case of more complicated problems, program staff from the agency responsible for the revenue will have to get involved in problem resolution. In order to meet processing time requirements, there will be close links between the processing center and the individual agencies.

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## Q & A

Effective communication channels consisting of telephone, fax and e-mail should enable timely and accurate resolution of problems. To the extent possible, procedures for problem resolution will be developed and tested prior to an agency coming on-line within the revenue and information processing center.

In the case where problems are too complicated to be resolved within one day's time the processing will be done as soon as problem resolution occurs. In some instances the revenue itself can be deposited and the problem resolved in due course. In other cases, deposits will have to be made into a holding account until the matter is completely resolved. These scenarios are not unlike what is occurring in the current processing model within respective agencies.

Q. *How will the center process payments from out of State organizations and other Montana State agencies?*

A. This is a matter of establishing an appropriate payee identifier sufficiently flexible to be used with many different types of payees or having a data field that allows payees to be identified by social security number, corporation number or a standard public sector identifier that can be used for federal, State, county, municipal or other public sector organizations. Development of appropriate payee identifiers will occur through the visioning process with participation from all concerned agencies.

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## Q & A

*Q. For certain withholding payments the date of collection is required. How can the center ensure that this information will be accurately captured?*

A. Date of collection is an example of a data field that may be required for certain types of revenue processing. The date of collection will be drawn off the accompanying or supporting information that is included with payments. The payment coupons can be bar-coded to indicate a certain coupon type and the scanner could be programmed to look for the date of collection supplied by the employer. In the case where withholding payments are processed through EDI, then date of collection is easily supplied by the employer as one of the data fields that is sent electronically to the State of Montana.

*Q. Confidentiality of the information that my Department handles is a key concern. How will the center deal with confidentiality?*

A. Confidentiality of information is based upon security procedures in handling and storing of data within the center and in the trust of the personnel working with the information. The center will have established security procedures to ensure confidential information is handled in a manner commensurate with its sensitivity. Staff will be briefed on and expected to follow the information security procedures necessary to maintain confidentiality of information.